

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 EB-08 COME-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 OES-07 /110 W

-----115195 170708Z /14

R 161821Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1761

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10820

E.O.11652:GDS

TAGS:ECON, UR, US, JA

SUBJECT: JAPANESE VIEWS ON BREZHNEV TRIP TO SIBERIA

REF: (A) STATE 113327, (NOTAL)

1. PARTLY IN ANTICIPATION OF JUNE MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON, U.S. AND JAPANESE EMBOFFS MET MAY 15 TO COMPARE NOTES ON RECENT BREZHNEV TRIP TO SIBERIA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THERE. WE DISCUSSED ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE TRIP ALONG THE LINES OF MOSCOW 8098 AND STATE 117397. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF WEST SIBERIAN ENERGY PROJECTS, THE TRIP DID NOT IN THE SHORT RUN PRESAGE INCREASED INVESTMENT BEYOND LEVELS ALREADY PLANNED (INCLUDING THE INCREASE FOR RAILWAYS ALREADY MENTIONED BY BAYBAKOV IN DECEMBER).

2. SPEAKING FOR THE JAPANESE SIDE, COUNSELOR TANAKA SAID TRIP COULD ALSO BE VIEWED IN A LONGER PERSPECTIVE AS AN ATTEMPT BY BREZHNEV TO INDICATE BY HIS PRESENCE THAT INCREASED IMPORTANCE IS BEING ATTACHED TO SIBERIA. WHILE NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT IS FORESEEN, HIS PRESENCE AND
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REMARKS ABOUT IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS MAY BE INTENDED TO CONVEY AN IMPLIED PROMISE OF FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS. THIS IMPLIED COMMITMENT MAY BE IMPORTANT FOR RETAINING WORKERS AT SIBERIAN SITES AS THE EXISTING MORAL AND MATERIAL INCENTIVES ARE REACHING THE LIMITS OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. (IN TANAKA'S ANALYSIS, MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS WERE HANDLED BY KOSYGIN AND

BAYBAKOV IN THEIR VISIT TO WEST SIBERIA.)

3. TANAKA ALSO ADVANCED THE VIEW THAT AS BREZHNEV WENT EAST HIS REMARKS CHANGED IN TONE. IN WEST SIBERIA HE UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS ENERGY RESOURCES, PRAISED ACCOMPLISHMENTS BUT CRITICIZED THE PARTY FOR NOT DOING MORE. AS HE WENT FURTHER EAST HIS REMARKS BECAME MORE DEFENSIVE ABOUT THE PARTY'S WORK EVEN WHILE ADMITTING A NEED FOR BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS.

4. TURNING TO OTHER PROBLEMS, THE JAPANESE POINTED OUT THAT A MAJOR TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM IS THAT THE CHITA-USSURIYSK SECTION OF THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD REMAINS A BOTTLE-NECK BECAUSE IT IS NOT ELECTRIFIED. TANAKA HAD RECENTLY LEARNED IN TOKYO ABOUT SOVIET PLANS TO WIDEN AND LINK UP EXISTING ROAD SEGMENTS IN ORDER TO CREATE A TRANS-SIBERIAN HIGHWAY. THE MOSCOW-NOVOSIBIRSK SECTION IS COMPLETE AND IS SCHEDULED TO REACH CHITA BY 1984 AND VLADIVOSTOK IN 1990.

5. WE PASSED OUR JAPANESE COLLEAGUES COPIES OF SOME OF OUR RECENT TRIP REPORTS ON SIBERIA AND HOPE TO GET THEIR COMMENTS BACK IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. INCLUDED WERE MOSCOW A-80, 83, 84, 92, 119 AND 124. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, VISITS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW10820
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780207-0548
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780554/aaaabtus.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9648c19c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 113327
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2678790
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JAPANESE VIEWS ON BREZHNEV TRIP TO SIBERIA
TAGS: ECON, UR, US, JA, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9648c19c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014